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We claim:

1. An antigen composition comprising synthetic cardiolipin and synthetic lecithin.
2. The antigen composition of Claim 1, further comprising cholesterol.
3. The composition of Claim 2, wherein the concentration of cholesterol is approximately 0.9%
4. The composition of Claim 2, further comprising an alcohol.
5. The composition of Claim 1, wherein the concentration of cardiolipin is between approximately 0.02 and 0.04%.
6. The composition of Claim 5, wherein the concentration of cardiolipin is approximately 0.03%.
7. The composition of Claim 1, wherein the concentration of lecithin is between approximately 0.11 and 0.16%.
8. The composition of Claim 7, wherein the concentration of lecithin is approximately 0.14%.
9. The composition of Claim 1, wherein the cardiolipin is tetramyristoyl cardiolipin.
10. The composition of Claim 1, wherein the lecithin is 1-palmitoyl-2-oleoyl-*sn*-glycero-3-phosphocholine.
11. The composition of Claim 4, wherein the alcohol is ethanol.

12. A method for detecting the presence of *Treponema pallidum* in a human comprising combining a biological sample from the human with a composition comprising synthetic cardiolipin and synthetic lecithin and detecting an immunocomplex formed between an antibody in the biological sample and the composition.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the composition further comprises cholesterol and an alcohol.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the concentration of cholesterol in the composition is approximately 0.9%.

15. The method of Claim 12, wherein the alcohol is ethanol.

16. The method of Claim 12, wherein the concentration of cardiolipin in the composition is between approximately 0.01 and 0.05%.

17. The method of Claim 12, wherein the concentration of lecithin in the composition is between approximately 0.11 and 0.16%.

18. The method of Claim 12, wherein the cardiolipin in the composition is tetramyristoyl cardiolipin.

19. The method of Claim 12, wherein the lecithin in the composition is 1-palmitoyl-2-oleoyl-*sn*-glycero-3-phosphocholine.

20. The method of Claim 12, wherein the detection of an immunocomplex is a positive diagnosis of syphilis.

